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BRIJ BHUSHAN SET TO ATTEND WFI ELECTION

Ineligible to contest, Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, who has been under fire, is set to attend the Wrestling Federation of India election scheduled on July 11. He is currently Uttar Pradesh Wrestling Association chief, and it is understood that the state unit has nominated him along with his son, Karan Bhushan Singh, who is the vice-president of the federation, for preparation of the electoral college for the polls, reports *Firoz Mirza*. P19

No ifs and buts in dealing with terror, Modi tells US lawmakers

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday called terrorism "an enemy of humanity" and said there can be "no ifs or buts" in dealing with it, in his address to the US Congress. He made history by becoming the first Indian to address a joint session of the US Congress for the second time.

"Terrorism is an enemy of humanity and there can be no ifs or buts in dealing with it," Modi told US lawmakers.

He made a veiled attack on China, saying: "The dark clouds of coercion and confrontation are casting their shadow in the Indo-Pacific."

Known for his alliterations, Modi referred to the phenomenal growth in Artificial Intelligence technology, adding another AI — America and India — was emerging, drawing applause. His address drew about 15 standing ovations.

A joint statement after Modi's summit with US President Joe Biden said both sides will focus on measures to facilitate greater technology sharing, including co-production in semiconductors, 5G and 6G telecom, quantum and high-end computing. India and the US signed multiple pacts to push bilateral commerce, technology transfer, joint development of technologies in the area of semiconductor, 5G and 6G telecom and open source-based telecom network, quantum and high-performance computing etc. Both Modi and Biden emphasised the need to put in place a "Trusted Network" and "Trusted Sources" bilateral framework.

US Vice President Kamala Harris and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy laugh as PM Narendra Modi makes a joke during his address to the US Congress | AP

"Very clearly, technology, particularly advanced technology, across all domains ranging from defence to space and energy is one of the most important substantive outcomes," Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra told reporters.

On the trade front, both sides agreed to end six trade disputes at the WTO. India also decided to remove retaliatory customs duties on 28 US products.

At a joint press meet after the summit, Modi brushed aside a query on allegations of human rights violations in India. "We have always proved that democracy can deliver. And when I say deliver, this is regardless of caste, creed, religion, gender. There's absolutely no space for discrimination... If there are no human rights, then it's not a democracy," Modi said. P9

PM's remark on Kamala Harris draws applause

Speaking about migration, the prime minister called the US a country that has embraced people from around the world. He said there were many with Indian roots in the US Congress. Then, looking back at US Vice President Kamala Harris, Modi, said "There is one behind me, who has made history!" drawing widespread applause.

Modi, Biden toast ginger ale at WH dinner

As both PM Narendra Modi and US President Joe Biden don't drink alcohol, the two leaders raised the customary toast, holding glasses of ginger ale. "The good news for both of us is we both don't drink," Biden joked and told Modi when there's no alcohol in the glass, it must be held with the left hand.

Amid AAP hiccup, Oppn vows to jointly fight BJP

Next meet in Cong-ruled Shimla to give their strategy a final shape

RAMASHANKAR @ Patna

LEADERS of 15 Opposition parties on Friday resolved to contest the 2024 Lok Sabha elections together at their four-hour long meeting here, though a grumbling AAP demanded its price for joining the ranks.

AAP sought to hold a gun to the Congress' temple, saying any alliance with it would be difficult unless it agrees to oppose the Centre's Delhi ordinance in Parliament, which led to some angry exchanges before NCP chief Sharad Pawar doused the fire.

In all, 32 leaders attended the meeting hosted by Bihar CM Nitish Kumar.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the next Opposition meeting would be held in Shimla on July 10 or 12 to give a final shape to their strategy. Crafting a common agenda was work in progress, he informed. "We will have to evolve separate plans for every state and we will work together to dethrone the BJP at the Centre," he added.

Lalu asks Rahul to get married

Lalu was in his elements when he suggested to Rahul Gandhi to get married. "It's time you get married. We all will be part of the wedding party," he said at the joint press meet. "Now, that you have said it, it will happen," Rahul said in his response.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said opposition leaders, he said, might have some differences but they would have to work together by being flexible.

A vintage Lalu was on display, as he said, "I have regained my health fully and I am ready to fight against Narendra Modi."

West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee said, "We are opposed to BJP's dictatorship and atrocity."

Sparks flew after Delhi CM Arvind Kejrwal alleged a hidden understanding between the Grand Old Party and the BJP while seeking a commitment from the Congress on the Delhi ordinance. Congress leader KC Venugopal in his rebuttal wondered, "How is it possible? Can Congress reach an agreement with BJP?" He got support from NC's Omar Obdullah, who said Kejriwal should look within before leveling any accusation against any other party. "Where were you when Article 370 was revoked by the Centre?" he taunted. The matter was settled after Pawar played peacemaker.

Will give 40% commission proof, says Kempanna

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

KARNATAKA State Contractors' Association president D Kempanna on Friday urged Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to take steps to clear the dues of contractors, amounting to Rs 20,000 crore.

The previous BJP government had demanded 40% commission to clear these bills, which means a bribe of about Rs 8,000 crore, he alleged and said, "I am ready to produce proof in this regard."

Kempanna and other office-bearers of the association met Siddaramaiah here. Addressing them, the CM alleged that the previous BJP government's financial irresponsibility and commission menace caused serious problems for contractors.

He said the state's financial condition worsened under the BJP rule and it may take some time to recover. P4

FIR against teacher for beating Class 4 student

PRAVEEN KUMAR @ Bengaluru

AN FIR has been registered against a 35-year-old teacher of a private school at Kadugodi in Whitefield for beating a Class 4 student.

The incident came to light on Wednesday after the boy returned home from school with bluish marks on his face and body. When his mother questioned him, he revealed that he was allegedly beaten up by his teacher.

Immediately, the boy's parents, who are also teachers, rushed to the school and complained to the principal. The parents, who watched the CCTV footage of the classroom, found that the teacher had beaten their son 43 times. The school reportedly terminated the services of the social science teacher after the incident. The boy was allegedly beaten up on Wednesday between 9.15 am and 9.40 am. After a complaint was filed by the boy's father, the Kadugodi police filed a case against the teacher. P5

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